TASTE.

AN

ESSAY.

Quid deceat, quid non; quo virtus, quo ferat error:
Scribendi rectè, sapere est & principium & fons.
Hor. art. Poet.

What fit, what not, what excellent or ill;
Sound Judgment is the Ground of Writing well.
E. of Rofcom.

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ERRATA.

Pag. 1. Juſtneſs *leg.* propriety. *p.* 3. *lin.* 1, *del.* and. *p.* 4. Ela, *&c. leg.* Eloquentiæ. *p.* 16. ſigenas *leg.* ſic genus. *p.* 19. ab illo, *&c. leg.* Ab illo ſenſus, ab illo verba, *&c. p.* 20. juvines *leg.* juvenes. *p.* 31. Rhetoricum *leg.* Rhetoricam. *p.* 37. ex culta *leg.* exculta. *p.* 39. glueris humans *leg.* generis humani. *ibid.* nitiai *leg.* initia.

THE BOOKSELLER TO THE READER.

ALL the favour I have to ask of the Reader is, a candid perusal of the following Essay; the Materials I am told, have been drawn from the most celebrated Writers in the Latin tongue, as Tully, Seneca, Quintilian, &c.

They

The PREFACE.

*They were collected by the famous M. Rollin, and do now appear in an Engliſh dreſs, wherein they have been ſo generally approved by thoſe who have read them in the manuſcript, that one might ſuſpect the French author muſt have ſuffered ſome violence, but I am aſſured He is ſtrictly adhered to; ſo that * Sir John Denham's complaint,*

Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
That few but ſuch as cannot write tranſlate,

tho' almoſt univerſally true, cannot be applied, with any rea-

* See the Verſes to Sir Richard Fenſhaw on his Paſtor Fido.

reaſon, to this performance, for which I am obliged to a Gentleman who has already preſented the World with ſeveral valuable Books in our language, without wandering from the ſenſe, or loſing the ſpirit of the originals: I am in hopes, as a Publiſher, the Town will favour my firſt appearance, which, I have the pleaſure to obſerve, introduces neither Libels againſt the Government, Blaſphemous diſcourſes againſt Chriſtianity, nor Scandalous attempts upon other Men's Characters.

I ſhall

The PREFACE.

I ſhall always endeavour to avoid being concerned (as far as poſſible) in writings of ſuch a nature; and, for that reaſon, flatter myſelf, the polite and ingenious will encourage a Diſcourſe which may contribute to rectify the corrupted Taſte, which now too generally prevails amongſt us.

THE

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AN

CONTENTS.

AN

ESSAY

ON

TASTE.

TASTE, as we here conſider it, that is, in reſpect to Reading and Compoſition, is a delicate, lively, nice, and exact diſcernment of all the truth, beauty, and juſtneſs of thoſe thoughts and expreſſions which are contained in a diſcourſe. It diſtinguiſhes what is agreable to the moſt exact decorum proper to

every character, and ſuitable to the different circumſtances. And whilſt, by a fine and exquiſite perception, it obſerves the graces, turns, manners, and expreſſions moſt capable of pleaſing; it likewiſe perceives all the faults that occaſion a contrary effect, and particularly diſtinguiſhes wherein they conſiſt, and how far they deviate from the ſtrict rules of Art, and the genuine beauties of Nature.

THIS happy quality, which is more eaſily perceived than defined, is not ſo much the effect of genius as judgment, and is a kind of natural reaſon brought to perfection by ſtudy. In compoſition it ſerves to guide and direct the Mind, uſing the Imagination without giving the reigns to it, but ſtill retaining the ſuperiority. It conſults Nature in every thing, following her ſtep by

by ſtep, and being a perfect repre-ſentation of her. In the midſt of riches and plenty, it is ſober and reſerved, diſpenſing duly and prudently all the beauties and graces of Diſcourſe; never ſuffering itſelf to be dazzled by what is falſe, how glaring ſoever it be. It is equally offended by ſaying too much, or too little, ſtopping exactly where it ought, and *(a)* cutting off, without pitty or reluctance, all that goes beyond what is beautiful and perfect. It is the want of this quality which occaſions the fault of all corrupt ſtiles, ſuch as bombaſt, falſe wit and point, *(b)* when, as Quintilian obſerves, the genius wanteth judgment, and is deceived by the appearance of excellence.

(a) Recideret omne quod ultra perfectum traheretur. Horat. Quicquid eſt ultra virtutem. Quintil.

(b) Quoties ingenium judicio caret, & ſpecie boni fallitur. Quintil. *l.* 8. *c.* 3.

THIS Taſte, which is ſimple and uniform in its principle, varies and multiplies itſelf infinitely, but in ſuch a manner, that under a thouſand different ſhapes, in proſe, or in verſe, in a prolix or conciſe, a jocoſe or ſerious ſtile, it is ſtill the ſame, and carries throughout a certain character of Truth and Nature, which makes it *(c)* perceived at firſt ſight by every diſcerning perſon. We cannot ſay that the ſtile of Terence, Phædrus, Saluſt, Cæſar, Tully, Livy, Virgil and Horace are the ſame, *(d)* yet they all have, if we may ſo ſpeak, a certain tincture

(c) Quod ſentitur latente judicio velut palato, ibid. *l.* 6. *c.* 6.

(d) Nec refert quod inter ſe ſpecie differant, cum genere conſentiant — Omnes candem ſanitatem ela quentiæ ferunt: ut, ſi omnium pariter libros in manum ſumpſeris, ſcias, quamvis in diverſis ingeniis, eſſe quumdam judicii ac voluntatis ſimilitudinem & cognationem. Dialog. de Orat. cap. 25.

tincture of wit in common with them, and which, in this difference of genius and ſtile, brings them near, and unites them together, making a ſenſible difference between them and other writers who are not ſtruck with this ſtamp of true antiquity.

I SAY that this diſtinguiſhing faculty is a kind of natural reaſon brought to perfection by ſtudy. In truth, all men bring this firſt principle of Taſte with them into the world, as well as thoſe of Rhetorick and Logick; the proof of which is, that a good *(e)* orator hardly ever fails of the approbation of the multitude; and that there is not in this particular, as *Cicero* obſerves, any difference in notion and

(e) Nunquam de bono oratore, aut non bono doctis hominibus cum populo diſſenſio fuit. Cic. in Brut. n. 185.

and taſte between the ignorant and knowing.

It holds the ſame in Muſick and Painting: A Concert, when it is juſtly compoſed through all its parts, and rightly performed, as well in reſpect to the inſtruments as the voices, gives a general delight; but if there happen to be any diſcord or harſhneſs of ſound, it diſpleaſes even thoſe who are intirely ignorant of muſick; they know not what it is that ſhocks them, yet find their ears offended; but it is becauſe Nature has given them a taſte, and a ſenſe of Harmony.

In the ſame manner a well-drawn picture charms and raviſhes the ſpectator, who has not the leaſt notion of painting; ask him what it is that pleaſes him, and why it pleaſes him, he can give you no account,

account, nor aſſign the true reaſon; but ſenſation has almoſt the ſame effect on him, that art and experience has on the skilful.

THUS much muſt be ſaid of the Taſte which we here ſpeak of, (*f*) almoſt every-body have in themſelves the firſt principles of it, altho' in the greater part of mankind they are leſs clear for want of inſtruction and reflection; and they are even ſtifled or corrupted by a vicious education, or by evil cuſtoms, or by the prevailing prejudices of our age and country.

BUT how depraved ſoever our Taſte is, it is not entirely extinguiſhed, there remains always in men certain fixt proportions of it, deeply imprinted on their mind, in which they

(*f*) *In ſita ſunt nobis omnium artium ſemina.* Senec. de benef. lib. 4. cap, 6.

they agree and unite. When theſe ſecret ſeeds are cultivated with care, they may be brought to a clearer and more diſtinct perfection.

And if it happens that theſe firſt notions are rouzed by a certain light, the luſtre of it makes our minds attentive to all the unalterable rules of truth and beauty, which diſcovers the natural order, and neceſſary conſequences, and ſerve them in the mean time as a model to make the application of it the more eaſy. We generally find that people of the beſt underſtandings, gladly reform their old miſtakes, and correct the error of their former judgments, and return to what perſons of a refined and approved Taſte judge moſt proper, delicate, and exact, and, by degrees, draw others into it.

We may be convinced of this by the ſucceſs of certain famous Orators, or of ſome celebrated authors, who, by their natural ability, know how to recall theſe primitive ideas, and revive theſe ſeeds that lye hid in the minds of all mankind. They ſoon reunite in their favour the approbation of thoſe who make the beſt uſe of their reaſon, and preſently carry away the applauſe of people of all ages and conditions, the ignorant, as well as the knowing. It would be eaſy to fix amongſt us the date of this Taſte, which reigns in every art, as well as in polite Literature, and the Sciences; and by looking to the ſource of each of theſe, we ſhall find it is only a ſmall number of happy genii who have procured this glory and advantage to their country.

Even thoſe who, in the moſt improved ages, were illiterate, and unskill'd in the Sciences, did, however, receive a tincture of the reigning Taſte, which mixes itſelf, without their perceiving it, in their converſation, in their writings, and in their manners; there are but few of our martial men at this time, who do not write more correctly, and more elegantly, than Ville-Hardouin, and the reſt of the Officers, who lived in an age that was ſtill barbarous and unpoliſhed.

It may be concluded from all that I have ſaid, that rules and precepts may be laid down concerning this faculty of judging, and I know not why Quintilian, who, with reaſon, ſet ſo great a value on it, ſhould pretend that this quality could no more be attained by art,

art, than that of ſmelling and taſting, (g) unleſs he was unwilling to own, that there are ſome diſpoſitions ſo rude, and ſo far from having this faculty, that it might perſuade one to think it is in reality the gift of Nature alone.

I DO not even believe Quintilian's opnion to be true, in reſpect to the inſtance which he alledges, at leaſt as to what concerns Taſte. We need but enquire into what happens to certain Nations, which long habit ſtrongly addicts to the moſt odd and extravagant Compoſitions. They readily agree in commending exquiſite liquors, delicious meats, and diſhes artfully prepared by a skilful hand: They ſoon learn to diſtinguiſh the nicety of the ſeaſoning, when one

(g) *Non magis arte traditur quàm guſtus aut odor.* Quintil. lib. 1. cap. 5.

who is skilled in this way makes them obſerve it, and prefer them to the barbarous coarſeneſs of their ancient food. When I ſpeak thus, it is not becauſe I find theſe nations much to be pitied for being deprived of this knowledge and art, which is become ſo fatal to us; but we may judge by this of the reſemblance that there is between Taſte in reſpect to our ſenſes and bodies, and Taſte in reſpect to the mind; and how far the former is neceſſary to repreſent the characters of the latter.

THE Taſte of which we hear ſpeak, and which relates to matters of Learning, does not confine itſelf to what we call Sciences; it influences as it were imperceptibly other arts, *viz.*, thoſe of Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, and

and Muſick. It is the ſame diſcernment which introduces every where the ſame elegance, ſymetry, and order in the diſpoſition of the parts, by which noble ſimplicity, natural beauties, a judicious choice of ornaments, attracts our obſervation. On the contrary a depraved Taſte in theſe arts, hath always been the ſign and conſequence of the like in Learning. The crouded, confuſed, and barbarous ornaments of the ancient Gothick buildings, for the moſt part injudiciouſly placed, contrary to the beſt rules, and without juſt proportion, were the reſemblance of the Writings of that age, and we can ſtill diſcover in their Architecture, and in their Paintings, the ſtyle of their Compoſitions.

TASTE in Literature communicates

nicates itſelf both to publick behaviour, and our manner of living. To be accuſtomed to conſult primitive rules in one particular, naturally leads us to do the ſame in others. (*b*) Paulus Æmilius, who was ſo skill'd, and ſo expert in every particular, having after the conqueſt of Macedon made a magnificent feaſt for all the Greeks, and obſerving that they found the oeconomy infinitely more elegant than is uſual in a Soldier, he told them, that they were in the wrong to wonder at it, ſince the ſame genius which could rightly range an army in battle array, teaches us likewiſe how to order a fine entertainment.

But by a diſorder altogether ſurpriſing, and yet common, which

(*b*) Plutarch's *Life of* Paulus Æmilius.

which is an argument of the weakneſs, or rather corruption of human underſtanding, this very delicacy, this elegance, which Taſte in Learning and Eloquence uſually introduces in our manner of living; for inſtance, in regard to building and eating, begining by degrees to degenerate into exceſs and luxury, introduceth in its turn a corrupt Taſte, both for Learning and Eloquence. It is this which (*i*) Seneca explains to us in a very ingenious manner in one of his epiſtles, where he ſeems to deſcribe himſelf without perceiving it.

A FRIEND (*k*) of his asked him whence proceeded this alteration

(*i*) Seneca's *Epiſt.* 114.

(*k*) *Quare quibuſdam temporibus provenerit corrupti generis oratio, quæris; & quomodo in quædam vitia inclinatio ingeniorum facta ſit — quare aliàs ſenſus audaces & fidem egreſſi placuerint, aliàs abruptæ ſententiæ & ſuſpicioſæ, in quibus*

tion which we ſometimes find in Eloquence, and which leads almoſt all underſtandings into certain defects; as the affectation of bold and forced figures, daring metaphors, without caution or rule, ſuch as ſhort and ſudden thoughts, which leave people rather to gueſs what they would ſay than expreſs it.

SENECA (*l*) anſwers this queſtion by a proverb in uſe among the Greeks, As a man's life is, ſo is his diſcourſe. (*m*) As particular perſons deſcribe themſelves in their diſcourſe, ſo the ſtile in vogue is ſometimes a repreſentation of the manners of the Publick. The heart

quibus plus intelligendum eſt quàm audiendum: quare aliqua ætas fuerit, quæ tranſlationis jure uteretur inverecundè.

(*l*) *Quem admodum unius cujuſque actio dicenti ſimilis eſt, ſigenas dicendi aliquando imitatur publicos mores* ——

(*m*) *Talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita.*

Heart leads the Underſtanding, and imparts to it its vices as well as virtues; when in our furniture, our buildings, *(n)* and our meals, we value ourſelves for being diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world by new refinements, and by ſtudiouſly ſeeking for whatever is out of common uſe; the ſame Taſte communicates itſelf to our Eloquence, and brings into it novelty and diſorder.

THE *(o)* Mind that is not accuſ-

(n) Si diſciplina civitatis laboravit, & ſe in delicias dedit, argumentum eſt luxuriæ publicæ orationis laſcivia — non poteſt alius eſſe ingenio, alius animo color.

(o) Cùm aſſuevit animus faſtidire quæ ex more ſunt, & illi pro ſordidis ſolita ſunt; etiam in oratione quod novum eſt quærit — Modò id quod nuper increbuit, pro culpa habetur audax tranſlatio ac frequens — Non tantùm in genere ſententiarum vitium eſt, ſi aut puſillæ ſunt & pueriles, autim probæ & plus auſæ quàm ſalvo pudore licet: ſed ſi floridæ ſunt, & nimis dulces, ſi in vanum exeunt & ſine effectu, nihil amplius quàm ſonant.

tomed to form the Manners by rules, will never admit them to govern in Stile, and will be for nothing but what is new, glaring, uncommon, and bold; will mind no thoughts but ſuch as are low and pueril, or daring, and extravagant even to exceſs; will affect a laboured and ornamental ſtile, and glaring expreſſions, which have ſound and nothing elſe: *(p)* This kind of faults generally ſpread by the example of ſome one perſon, who thereby acquiring reputation, it becomes the mode, and he gains an aſcendant over the minds of others, and dictates to the reſt of mankind. Then it is thought an honour to follow him, he is ſtuddied and imitated, and his Stile becomes the rule and model of the Taſte of the Publick.

(p) Hæc vitia unus aliquis inducit, ſub quo tunc eloquentia eſt: ceteri imitantur, & alteri tradunt.

Publick. (q) As luxury in habit and diet is a ſign that the Manners of a Society are not well regulated, ſo licentiouſneſs of Stile, when it becomes publick and univerſal, ſhews that their Minds are depraved and corrupted.

In (r) order to remedy this, and form our thoughts and expreſſions in writing, we muſt purify the ſource from whence they flow. It is to the Mind that we muſt apply the remedy; when that is ſound and vigorous, our Eloquence

(q) *Quomodo conviviorum luxuria, quomodo veſtium, ægræ civitatis indicia ſunt: ſic orationis licentia, ſi modo frequens eſt, oſtendit quoque à quibus verba exeunt, procidiſſe.*

(r) *Oratio nulli moleſta eſt, niſi animus labat. Ideo ille curetur, ab illo verba exeunt. — Illo ſano ac valente, oratio quoque robuſta, fortis, virilis eſt: ſi ille procubuit, & cetera ſequuntur ruinam. —— Rex noſter eſt animus. Hoc incolumi cetera manent in officio, parent & obtemperant —— Cum verò ceſſit voluptati, artes quoque ejus actuſque marcent, & omnis ex languido fluidoque conatus eſt.*

is ſo too, but it grows feeble and languid when the Mind becomes ſo, and when it ſuffers itſelf to be weakened and enervated by pleaſure and ſenſual delights: in a word, it is that which is the Maſter that commands, and which gives motion to all; and every thing elſe follows its impreſſions.

It is beſides obſerved, that too laboured, and too abſtracted a Stile, is a ſign of want of genius. (*s*) Seneca would have an Orator (eſpecially when he treats of grave and ſerious

(*s*) *Nimis anxium eſſe circa verba & compoſitionem, mi Lucili, nolo: habeo majora quæ cures. Quære quid ſcribas, non quemadmodum. —— Cujuſcumque orationem videris ſolicitam & politam, ſcito animum quoque non minùs eſſe puſillis occupatum. Magnus ille remiſſius loquitur & ſecurius: quæcumque dicit, plus habent fiduciæ quam curæ. Noſti complures juvines, barba & coma nitidos, de capſulâ totos: nihil ab illis ſperaveris fortè, nihil ſolidum. Oratio vultus animi eſt: ſi circumtonſa eſt & fucata & manufacta, oſtendit illum quoque non eſſe ſincerum & habere aliquid fracti.* Senec. Ep. 115.

ſerious matters) be leſs attentive to his expreſſions, and the ranging of his words, than to ſentiments and the matters he treats of. When you find a Diſcourſe laboured and poliſhed with ſo much care and pains, you may conclude, ſays he, that it proceeds from one of a moderate genius, who is concerned about trifles. A Writer who has a great and elevated mind, ſtays not at ſuch minute circumſtances; he ſpeaks and thinks more nobly, and in every thing that he does, you may diſcover an eaſy and natural air, which ſhews a man rich in himſelf, and who doth not endeavour to appear ſo.

He afterwards compares this glittering and ornamental kind of Eloquence, to young men curiouſly adorned, and who are always before their looking-glaſs,

glaſs, or at their toilet: (t) we can expect nothing great and ſolid from men of this character. Juſt ſo it is with Orators, Diſcourſe is as it were the countenance of the Mind; if a man is trim in his dreſs, it is a ſign that there is ſome defect in his mind, and that it is not in its right frame; ſuch kind of adorning, which is attended with ſo much art and ſtudy, is not an ornament worthy of Eloquence.

WHO would not think upon hearing Seneca ſpeak after this manner, but that he was a declared enemy to Falſe-taſte, and that no-body was better able than he to oppoſe and prevent it? And yet he contributed more than any one to the vitiating men's minds, and corrupting Eloquence: I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak of it in another place, and

(t) *Barba & comanitidos, de capſulâ totos.*

and the more readily ſince this Falſe-taſte of glaring thoughts, and a ſort of pointed expreſſion, which is properly Seneca's character, ſeems likely to prevail in our age. I don't know but it may be a token and preſage of that ruin with which Eloquence is threatened amongſt us, and of which the enormous luxury, which reigns more than ever, and the almoſt univerſal decay of good manners, are perhaps the terrible forerunners.

As Seneca himſelf obſerves (and he is an inſtance) there ſometimes needs but One man, provided he has a great name, and by ſome peculiar talents has the art of gaining credit, to bring in vogue this Falſe-taſte and Corrupt ſtile. People through a ſecret ambition are for diſtinguiſhing themſelves from the common herd of Orators and Wri-

ters

ters of their time, and for opening a new road in which they march rather alone at the head of their new Diſciples, than in the ſteps of their old Maſters. They had rather paſs for Men of nice Diſcernment than true Underſtanding, preferring any thing glaring to what is ſolid, and the marvellous to what is natural and juſt; they had rather addreſs the imagination than the judgment, dazzle the mind than convince it, and ſurprize men into approbation than deſerve it.

WHIL'ST one of this character by a kind of ſorcery and ſoft enchantment carries off the admiration and applauſe of ſuperficial people, who are the greateſt part of Mankind, other Writers induced by the charms of novelty, and hopes of the ſame ſucceſs, are inſenſibly carried away by the torrent

torrent, and add to its force by going along with it. Thus this new-faſhioned Taſte without much difficulty turns out the former, tho' preferable to it, ſoon paſſing into a law, and overſpreading whole nations.

THIS conſideration ought to excite us to be diligent in putting a ſtop to, and hindering as much as poſſible the deſtruction of true Taſte; and thoſe upon whom the publick inſtruction of Youth depends ſhould look upon this as an eſſential part of their duty. The cuſtoms, manners, and laws of ancient nations are altered; they are often put in computation with our characters and cuſtoms, and the knowledge of them can be of little uſe to us. What they have done is paſt, and we expect no return; the moſt conſiderable actions have

had their courſe without our expecting the like again.

THE revolutions of Empires and States have perhaps very little relation to our preſent ſituation and neceſſities, and are therefore of leſs concern to us: but Taſte, which is founded on unalterable principles, is the ſame at all times; and this is the chief advantage propoſed to young people from their reading the Ancients, who have always, and with reaſon, been looked upon as the maſters, depoſitaries, and guardians of ſound Eloquence and Taſte. In ſhort, amongſt all thoſe things which contribute to adorn the Mind, we may ſay, that this is the moſt eſſential, and ought to be prefer'd to all the reſt.

THIS Taſte is not confined to polite Learning, it likewiſe relates,

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as we have already hinted, to all Arts, to all Sciences, and to all kinds of Knowledge. It conſiſts then in a certain, juſt and exact Diſcernment, which makes us perceive in each of theſe kinds of Science and Knowledge, what is moſt extraordinary, elegant, and uſeful, moſt eſſential, agreeable, or neceſſary to thoſe who apply themſelves to them; conſequently therefore this Study muſt be carried juſt ſo far as to know how to ſeparate as we ought that which merits a particular application and to be prefered to all the reſt. For want of this we may fail in the eſſential part of our profeſſion without our perceiving it; and this defect is not ſo uncommon as may be imagined; an example taken from the Cyropædia of Xenophon, may make this more evident.

Cyrus, Son to Cambyſes King of Perſia, had long been inſtructed in the art of War, doubtleſs by one of the moſt able, and beſt eſteemed maſters of his time. Cambyſes one day diſcourſing with his Son, put him upon talking of his Maſter, of whom this young Prince had a very great idea, and from whom he pretended to have learnt in general whatever was neceſſary for the right commanding an army. Has your maſter, ſaid Cambyſes, given you any leſſons of Oeconomy, that is to ſay, of the neceſſary methods for looking into the wants of an army, to provide their food, prevent ſickneſs, take care of the health of the Soldiers, and to ſtrenthen their bodies by frequent exerciſes, to excite emulation among them, procure obedience from

from them, and to be eſteemed and beloved by the Soldiers?

To all theſe particulars, and many others which the King run over, Cyrus anſwered, that he had not ſpoken one word, and that they were entirely new to him. And what then hath he taught you, ſaid Cambyſes? The exerciſe of Arms, replied the Prince, to mount a horſe, to draw the bow, to throw a javelin, to mark out a camp, to draw the plan of a Fortification, to range the Troops in battle-array, to review them, to ſee them march, to defile and to encamp. Cambyſes fell a laughing, and gave his Son to underſtand, that he had taught him none of thoſe things that were moſt neceſſary for a good Officer, and a skilful General; and in one Converſation only (which certainly ought to be ſtud-

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died by all young men of Quality deſigned for the Army) he taught him a great deal more than he had learnt in ſeveral years of that famous maſter.

We may in every profeſſion fall into the ſame inconveniency, either becauſe we do not give ſufficient attention to the main end which is propoſed from our Studies, or becauſe we have nothing but cuſtom for our guide, and blindly follow the footſteps of thoſe who are gone before us. Nothing is more neceſſary than the knowledge of Hiſtory. But if we content ourſelves to load our memory with a vaſt number of facts which are not material, and of but little concern to us, if we do but amuſe ourſelves with the dates or difficulties of the Chronology, or Geography, if we will not give ourſelves the trouble of

making

making ourſelves acquainted with the genius, the manners, and the characters of the great men there ſpoken of; we ſhall have learnt a great deal, and know but little.

A Rhetorician who, perhaps, is very learned, will run into a long train of precepts, defining very exactly every trope and figure, juſtly remarking the diſtinction, and very tediouſly treating of parallel queſtions, which were formerly banded about very briskly by the ancient Rhetoricians, and thus reſembling that Rhetorician *(u)* who Cicero tells us, was only capable of teaching people not to ſpeak at all, or to ſpeak ill.

In Philoſophy we may imploy a

(u) Scripſit artem Rhetoricum Cleanthes, ſed ſic, ut, ſi quis obmuteſcere concupierit, nihil aliud legere debeat. Cic. de Fin. l. 4. n. 7.

a conſiderable time in knotty and abſtract diſputations, and even in learning a number of fine, uncommon, and curious matters, whilſt we neglect the moſt eſſential part of this ſtudy, which is forming the Judgment, and regulating the Manners: In one word, the moſt neceſſary quality, not only in relation to the art of Speaking, and the Sciences, but alſo for the conduct of Life, is this Taſte, this Prudence, this Diſcernment, which teaches us in every particular, and on every occaſion, what ought to be done, and how it is to be done *(w)*.

The advantages of a good Education whereby the Taſte is fixed, the Mind improved, and our Manners regulated, is evident, not only from

(w) Illud dicere ſatis habeo, nihil eſſe, non modo in orando, ſed in omni vitâ, prius conſilio. Quintil. lib. 6. cap. 6.

from the difference obſervable among particular perſons, but even among whole nations.

THE Athenians were not poſſeſſed of a large territory in Greece, and yet how far did not their Reputation extend? By carrying the Sciences to perfection, they raiſed their glory likewiſe to the utmoſt height. The ſame School formed excellent Men of all kinds. From thence came ſkilful Orators, famous Captains, wiſe Legiſlators, able Politicians. That fruitful ſpring diſperſed the ſame advantages to all the liberal Arts, even ſuch as ſeem'd to have leaſt relation to it, *viz.* Muſick, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture. By this means were they regulated, enobled, made perfect, and, as if they had ſprung from the ſame Root, and were nouriſhed

by the ſame Soil, it cauſed them all to flouriſh at once.

When Rome became Miſtreſs of the World by her conqueſts, ſhe became likewiſe their admiration and model, by beautiful productions of the Mind of almoſt every ſort; and by this means gain'd over thoſe who were ſubjugated to her Empire, another kind of ſuperiority, much more flattering than that gained by her arms and victories.

Africa, formerly ſo fertile in Men of wit and extraordinary genius, thro' the neglect of Literature, is become perfectly barren, and even barbarous: From whence it takes its name, having for many ages not produced a ſingle perſon remarkable for any excellency, who hath recall'd to mind the Merit

of

of their Anceſtors, or ſeemed to have any remembrance of it himſelf. As much may be ſaid of Egypt, which had been look'd upon as the Fountain-head from whence all the Sciences flow'd.

The contrary hath happened to the People of the Weſt and North. They were long thought unpoliſh'd and barbarous, becauſe they had no Taſte for the productions of the Mind. But as ſoon as polite Learning got ground among them, they produced great men excellent in all kinds of Litterature, and of all Profeſſions, who equall'd other nations in whatever was moſt ſolid, ſublime and excellent.

It is daily obſerved, that as the Sciences get among any People, they transform them into new men, bringing them out of the obſcurity

in which they had languiſhed, and from the brutiſhneſs natural to them, by ſoftening their inclinations and manners, and giving them a better regulated Polity, and Laws that were more humane. Thus are they an undeniable inſtance that Men's minds are much the ſame in different climates; that it is the Sciences only that make ſo honourable a diſtinction; that Nations are exalted or debaſed according as theſe are cultivated or neglected, that they draw them out of obſcurity, or again overwhelm them in it, and ſeem to determine their fate.

But without ſearching into Hiſtory, we need but turn our eyes upon what paſſes in Nature, which ſhews us the vaſt difference that Tillage makes between two pieces of ground in other reſpects much the

the ſame. The one being neglected is wild and over-run with thorns; the other being ſtored with all ſorts of grain and fruits, and adorned with an agreeable variety of flowers, collects together in a little ſpot whatever is moſt rare, uſeful, and delightful: Its maſter's care makes it an happy epitome, as it were, of all the beauties of different ſeaſons and countries. Thus is it with our Mind, and we are always paid with intereſt for the pains we take to improve it. This is the fond which every man conſcious of the great things he was made and deſigned for, ſhould ſtrive to enhance the value of: (x) A fond ſo rich and fruitful, and ſo capable of immortal productions, is alone worthy of all his attention.

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(x) *Nihil feracius ingeniis, iis præſertim quæ diſciplina ex culta ſunt.* Orat. n. 48.

In reality, the mind is nouriſhed and ſtrengthened by the ſublime truths with which it is furniſhed by Study. It grows and increaſes, if we may ſo ſpeak with thoſe great Men whoſe works it ſtudies, as we aſſume the manners and ſentiments of thoſe with whom we, for the moſt part converſe. Through a noble emulation it values itſelf for aſpiring to their fame, and has hopes of ſucceſs by ſeeing that they have had. Forgetting its own weakneſs, it ſucceſsfully endeavours to riſe with them even above itſelf. Unfruitful ſometimes in its own fond, and confined within very narrow bounds, it invents little, and is eaſily exhauſted; but Learning ſupplies this unfruitfulneſs, and helps it to draw from others what is wanting. It extends its light and knowledge by the aſſiſtance of o-

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thers, carries its views farther, and multiplies its ideas, making them more various and lively: It ſhews how to dreſs truth in ſeveral ſhapes, diſcovering the great extent of principles, and aſſiſting it in drawing the moſt diſtant conſequences from them.

We are born in darkneſs and ignorance, and bad Education gives us many wrong prepoſſeſſions; but Study diſperſes the former and corrects the latter, making our own thoughts and reaſoning juſt and exact: This gives us for guides and models, the brighteſt and wiſeſt men of former ages, (y) who, in this ſenſe, may well be ſtiled with Seneca, the Maſters and Inſtructors of Mankind. Lending us their judg-

(y) *Quam venerationem perentibus meis debeo, eaudem illis preceptoribus glueris humans, à quibus tanti boni nitiai fluxerunt.* Senec. ep. 46.

judgment and their eyes, it enables us to go on ſafely, by the light which theſe excellent guides carry before us: Theſe after having paſſed the moſt ſevere examination of ſo many ages and people, and ſurvived the ruin of ſo many Empires, attained by unanimous conſent to be the ſupreme judges of Taſte, and compleat models of whatever is brought to greateſt perfection in Literature.

But the advantages of Study are not confined to what we call Sciences, it likewiſe qualifies us for Buſineſs and great Employments.

Paulus Æmelius, who put an end to the kingdom of Macedon, well knew how great men are formed. Plutarch obſerves the particular care he took in the education of his children. He was not

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ſatisfied with making them learn their own language by rules, as was then the cuſtom, but made them likewiſe ſtudy Greek. He provided them Maſters of all ſorts, in Grammar, Rhetorick and Logick, beſides thoſe who were to inſtruct them in Military affairs; and he aſſiſted himſelf, as often as poſſible, at all their exerciſes. When he had conquered Perſeus, he would not condeſcend ſo much as to caſt his Eyes upon the immenſe riches that were found in his Treaſury. He only permitted his Children (whom the Hiſtorian calls Φιλογραμματους, lovers of Learning) to take the Books belonging to that King's library.

THE ſucceſs anſwered the pains of ſo intelligent and careful a father. He had the advantage of giving Rome a ſecond Scipio Africanus,

canus, who conquered Carthage and Numantium, and was no leſs renowned for his uncommon Taſte in polite Literature and the Sciences, than his extraordinary Military virtues. (z) This great man always kept near him, whether in peace or war, Polybius the hiſtorian, and the philoſopher Panetius, whom he honoured with particular marks of friendſhip. 'Nobody, ſays an Hiſtorian, ſpeaking 'of Scipio, knew better how to 'intermix a ſtate of eaſe and that of 'action, nor make a better uſe of his 'vacancy from buſineſs; divided 'between the employments of 'war

(z) *Scipio tam elegans liberalium ſtudiorum omniſque doctrinæ & auctor & admirator fuit, ut Polybium Panætiùmque præcellentes ingenio viros domi militiæq; ſecum habuerit. Neque enim quis quam hoc Scipione elegantius intervalla negotiorum otio diſpunxit, ſemperq; aut belli aut pacis ſerviit artibus: Semper inter arma ac ſtudia verſatus, aut corpus periculis aut animum diſciplinis exercuit.* Pater l. 1. c. 13.

'war and peace, between arms 'and ſtudy, he either inured his 'body to dangers, or improved 'his mind by the Sciences.' It ſeems probably to be of him that *(a)* Cicero ſays, that he had the works of Xenophon ever in his hands; for I know not whether this will ſuit ſo well with the former Scipio.

(b) LUCULLUS received great aſſiſtance from reading good Authors and ſtudying Hiſtory. Seeing him appear at once at the head of Armies

(a) Africanus ſemper Socraticum Xenophontem in manibus habebat. Lib. 2. Tuſc. quæſt. n. 62.

(b) Magnum ingenium Luculli, magnumq; optimarum artium ſtudium, tum omnis liberalis & digna homine nobili ab eo percepta doctrina —— Ab eo laus imperatoria non admodum expectabatur-- ſed incredibilis quædam ingenii magnitudo non deſideravit indocilem uſûs diſciplinam. Itaque cum totum iter & navigationem conſumpſiſſet partim in percontando à peritis, partim rebus geſtis legendis, in Aſiam factus imperator venit, cum eſſet Roma profectus rei militaris rudis. Lib. 4. Academ. queſt. n. 1. & 2.

we admire his prodigous capacity. He left Rome, ſays Cicero, without any experience in the Military art, and came into Aſia a compleat and finiſhed Officer. His excellent genius, improved by the ſtudy of the liberal Arts, ſerved him inſtead of experience, from which, however, he ſeemed to want no ſupply.

Brutus ſpent great part of the night in inſtructing himſelf in the Military art, by the accounts of the exploits of the moſt famous Commanders, and did not think the time loſt which he ſpent in reading Hiſtorians, particularly Polybius, upon whoſe works he was employed juſt before the famous battle of Pharſalia.

It is not difficult to conceive, that the particular care the Romans took in the later times of the Commonwealth,

monwealth, to improve the minds of their Youth, ſhould naturally add a new merit and luſtre to the great qualities they enjoyed beſides, by enabling them equally to excel in the buſineſs of the Army and that of the Bar, and with like ſucceſs to manage the employments of the Sword and Gown.

It ſometimes happens that great Men not having improved their Mind by Study and polite Learning, diminiſh the ſplendor of their own atchievements, by the jejune, confuſed and inſipid accounts they give of them, ſo are not able to ſupport by their Pen what they have gained by the Sword. In this they differ very much from Cæſar, Polybius, Xenophon and Thucidides, who, by the livelineſs of their Deſcriptions carry the Reader into the field of battle, and

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ſhew him the manner of diſpoſing of the men and laying out the ground ; let him ſee the beginning of the attack and the ſucceſs, the inconveniencies which happened and their remedies, the different turns of fortune and the cauſes of them ; and by this detail lead him as it were by the hand to the event of the battle.

The like may be ſaid of thoſe employed in Treaties, or as Magiſtrates, in Governments, or to execute other Commiſſions; in a word, all ſorts of Employments, in which there is occaſion for a Man's ſpeaking in publick or in private Conferences, for writing or giving an account of his proceedings, for managing the tempers of people, gaining them over and perſuading them. And what Employment is there which does

does not require almoſt all theſe Qualifications.

THERE is nothing more common than to hear People in buſineſs very much complain of the neglect of their Education; long experience and ſerious reflection having taught them to lament the not being brought up with a Taſte for the Sciences, the uſe and value of which they begin too late to experience. They own that the want of this has hindered them from or rendered them unequal to great Employments, or made them ſink under their weight.

WHEN upon certain remarkable occaſions and in eminent ſtations we ſee a young man of Buſineſs, who has been improved by polite Learning, attract the applauſe of the Publick, what Father is there, who would

would not wish for such a Son? and what Son, of the least understanding, would not desire to be so successful? then every-body agrees in observing the advantages of the Sciences; every-body perceives how much they may contribute to raise a Man above others of his age, and sometimes even above his condition.

But were there nothing else in Study but habituating us to labour, lessening the fatigue of it, putting a stop to and fixing our natural levity of mind, getting the better of our aversions to application and a sedantary life, and overcoming whatever enslaves and captivates us, that itself were sufficient advantage. In truth, it takes us off from idleness, gaming and debauchery; it helps to fill up that va-

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cant time which lies ſo heavy upon ſome people's hands, and makes that leaſure very agreeable, (c) which without the aid of polite Literature is a kind of death, and in a manner entombs a man alive. It enables us to form a true judgment of what is publiſhed, to make an intimacy with Men of Wit, and to get admitance into the beſt company, to partake of the moſt learned converſation, and to furniſh on our part matter of diſcourſe, without which we ſhould be mute; in ſhort, this makes converſation more uſeful and agreeable, by interſperſing Facts with our Reflections, and by ſetting off the one by the other.

It muſt be owned, that oftentimes in converſation and buſineſs, and

(c) *Otium ſine literis mors eſt, & vivi hominis ſepultura.* Senec. ep. 82.

and even in compoſitions, there is no occaſion for the Greek or Roman Hiſtory, Philoſophy or Mathematicks; yet (*d*) a proper application to theſe Sciences, gives the mind a juſtneſs and ſolidity, an exactneſs, and even a gracefulneſs, which is eaſily perceived by intelligent perſons.

(*d*) *Ipſa multarum artium Scientia etiam aliud agentes nos ornat, atque, ubi minimè credas, eminet & excellet.* Dial. de Orat. cap. 32.

FINIS.

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